

Tibet under the Tartar Emperors of China in the 13th Century A.D.—
(By Rai SARAT CHANDRA DAS, Bahadur, C.I.E.)

THE HIERARCHY OF SAKYA.

Legendary account.—Once on a time there descended on the pure and lofty tableland of Ngah-ri in Upper Tibet three brothers called *Nam lha* or heavenly gods. The eldest of them was *Namlha Chyiring*, the second *Namlha Yuring*, and the youngest *Namlha Waseh*.

These three brothers were entreated by the people of Ngah-ri to take up the sovereignty of their country. The youngest brother, choosing to dwell upon earth, became king and married the reigning chief's daughter.

To him were born four sons, who became known as the four Sijili brothers. They became involved in disputes with the tribe of Dong and the eighteen ancient tribes of Tibet. With the assistance of *Namlha Yu-ring* the princes compelled the eighteen tribes to submit to their authority. *Namlha Yu-ring* also choosing to reside on this earth, married Musa Dembu of the family of Mu, by whom he had seven sons. These were well-known as the Musang brothers. The first six of them, together with their father, are said to have been lifted up to heaven by means of a noose called *Muthag* or *Kyang-thag* which had been stretched down by the gods for their delivery.

The youngest son married Thog-Cham Oorma, the daughter of Hoichen, the god of thunder and light. His son Thog-tsha Paotag married a princess of the *Nāga* named Tama, who presented him with a son who was brave and handsome. He married Monzah, a princess of the royal family of *Mon* (Sub-Himalaya). They lived at the limit of vegetation on the slope of a snowy peak of that great mountain and named their son Ya-pang-kye or one born in the higher grass-land. He killed the *Srin-mo* (demon) named Kya-ring Thagmeh and carried away his beautiful wife YabumSilema to his mountain house. By her he had a son who, being born of a woman captured by fight or *Khon*, was named *Khon Barkyeh*, born in the mid-region. Hence originated the great family of *Khon* which played an important part in the medieval history of Tibet. *Khon Barkyeh* married a Himalayan princess named Tsan-cham Mon. Their son was Kon-jeh, the accomplished one. Being a man of rare intelligence, valour and promise to achieve extraordinary feats, he wanted to rule over a country. His father sent him to Gang-zang-lha. There observing the eight signs of a good country he made his

residence on the slopes of the lofty Ngan-tse thang mountain. At this time¹ there reigned in Tibet the mighty king Thi-srong-deu tsan.

Early History.—In later times the family of *Khon* multiplied in the valley of Shab-chu in Tsang. One of its principal members named *Khon Konchog Gyalpo*, having received religious instructions and precepts from some learned Lamas, became famous for his learning in Western Tibet. On the occasion of a religious festival which took place at Doh he witnessed a Lama dance. In it, many Lamas who pretended to be very holy, took part. Some of them wore the frightful masks of the twenty-eight goddesses called *Wang-chug-ma*, and with different weapons in their hands, danced before the assembled people in a fantastic manner. Some *Tantrik* Lamas, who wore the flowing and clotted locks of the *Matrika* or *Mamo* nymphs, also danced to the music of drums and cymbals. *Konchog Gyalpo* returning home, described what he had seen to his brother, who observed: "Now the time of the degeneration of the *Nying-ma* mysticism has arrived. Henceforth, in Tibet, none among the *Nying-ma* Lamas will attain to sainthood. We must now sever our connexion with them. Let us, therefore, take care of our paternal possessions, our religious books and symbols. In *Mankhar* there is a Buddhist sage named *Dogmi Lochava*. You should go to take religious instructions from him." He then concealed all his sacred books securely underneath some rocks in a cavern.

Konchog Gyalpo could not find *Dogmi* at *Mankhar*, but he met *Khyin Lotsāva* in a cemetery at *Yahlûng*. With him he studied Buddhist metaphysics. Before he could finish his studies the *Lotsāva*² died, in consequence of which he had to search out *Dogmi Lotsāva*. He presented his teacher with seventeen pony-loads of valuable things including some beads of precious stones, gold and silver. Having acquired great proficiency in Buddhist metaphysics and in some of the new theories found in the reformed works of *Dogmi* called "*Sarma Choi*" (new tenets) he became known as a religious professor. He removed his residence to *Yahlung*. Erecting a small monastery at *Taolûng*, he also spent a few years there. One day, accompanied by one of his disciples, while he was walking on the top of the hill of *Taolûng*, he saw a fine site for a monastery in front of *Ponpouri* hill—a plot of white land with a river flowing by its right. Noticing that it possessed many auspicious signs, he thought that if he built a monastery upon it, it would contribute much to human happiness and welfare. He asked the advice of his friend *Jovo*

¹ This was the first part of the 8th Century A.D.

² A Tibetan Sanskritist was called *Lochava* or *Lotsā-va* from *locha* to speak.

Dong-nag, who approved of the proposal. He purchased the land by making present of a white mare, one coat of mail, a string of beads of precious stones and a buckler to the owner. In the 40th year of his age, Lama Konchog Gyalpo founded a monastery on the plain of Sakya¹ (A.D. 1073), which in the 13th century became the capital of Tibet and also the chief seat of the Sakyapa hierarchs.

CONQUEST OF TIBET BY THE TARTARS.

The Tartar Chinghis (Jenghis Khan) made the conquest of the whole of Tibet in the year 1203, about which time Behar and Bengal were seized by the Mahomedans under Baktyar Khiliji. After firmly establishing his authority first in China and then in Tibet, he ordered a general census to be taken of the latter country, but before the work could be taken up by his generals in Tibet, he died. His grandson E-chan Gotan, to whose share fell both Tibet and China, hearing the fame of the *Pandit* hierarch of Sakya named Kungah Gyal-tshan, invited him to China and received him in audience at his palace of Tulpai De. Thus the learned Buddhist Hierarch of Tibet gained the opportunity to implant in the mind of the dreaded monarch the doctrine of Buddha—to have compassion over all living beings and to effect one's own salvation by loving others. The humanizing influence of Buddhism touched the minds of the cruel and blood-thirsty Mongols. They now perceived that brute force did not make them superier to the Lamas who believed in the existence of a thing like love which conquered all. So the hierarch, in turn, quietly effected the spiritual conquest of the heartless Tartars. After his return to Tibet Kungah Gyal-tshan appointed Çakya Zangpo as *Pon-chen* (chief governor) of Tibet proper. Kungah Gyal-tsan, better known as Sakya *Panchen* (*Pan*, Pandit and *chen*, great), was so well impressed with the honesty and righteousness of his governor that he ordered all the Lamas with the exception of Huyupa and Sharpa Yeçé Chûng to make salulation to him.

On the death of E-chan Gotan Khan, Khublai Khan (the miraculous king) became Emperor of China. He removed his residence to Peking and built the Tartar city called Khanbalik, *i.e.*, the city of the great Khan. Shortly, after this, he ordered one of his generals named Tāmen to proceed to Tibet to arrange for its better government. When Tāmen came to take leave of him the Emperor addressed him in the following terms:—"The Tibetans are a powerful nation. In ancient times, when there was a monarchial form of government in that country, the Tibetan armies had invaded

¹ Sakya (from *Sa*, land and *kya*, white) signifies white plain.

China several times. During the reign of Emperor Thaijung (Tāi tsūng) of the T'ang dynasty, the Tibetans advanced as far as Utai Shan in Shenzi, and at the command of their general Pa-utan hu, all as one man carried out his orders. Since Chinghis Khan's conquest of it there has been no king in Tibet. The grand Lamas of Sakya are appointed by us. They are our spiritual instructors. Go, therefore, at once to Sakya and by the exercise of your diplomatic tact bring all Tibet fully under our rule." To this gracious command Tāmen with profound veneration replied:—"Your Majesty, in obedience to the wish of the son of heaven this servant will proceed to Tibet. The people of the country called Sifan (Western country, *i.e.*, Tibet) being brave and wild are not amenable either to their own laws or to the laws of China. Our frontier guards fail to restrain them from their predatory habits. How will your Majesty's servant proceed to Tibet to subdue them, and what arrangements about the expenses of his mission will be permitted?" The Emperor commanded that he should proceed on his mission and take the necessary funds and articles for presents from the imperial treasury. Arrived at Sakya, he should make division of the country into large and smaller *Jam* (district) for administrative purposes, apportioning lands to each *Jam* with due regard to their extent and nature, *i.e.*, according to the sparseness or density of the population in them.

Furnished with credentials from the Emperor and carrying with him suitable presents for the clergy and the laity, Tāmen proceeded to Tibet with a large armed escort and a number of survey officers. Arrived at Sakya he read the edict of the Emperor before a large number of people assembled for the purpose. He sent the survey officers to the different provinces of the country for reconnoitering. On their report he divided the country lying between Sakya and the Chinese frontier into 27 districts or *Jam*. Doh-meh or lower Doh, where the land was fertile was divided into seven *Jam*; Doh-toi (upper Doh) into nine *Jam*; and Ū and Tsang into eleven *Jam*, of which seven, *viz.*, Sakya, Sog, Tsi-mar, Shag, Sha-pho, Kong and Gonsar, were apportioned to Tsang, and four, *viz.*, Tog, Tshong-dui, Darlûng and Thom Darang, to Ū. A *Jampon* or district officer was appointed over each *Jam*.

He apportioned these *jām* to the thirteen provinces or *Thikor* into which Tibet was then divided, appointing a *Thipon* or provincial governor over every one of them. He proclaimed all over Tibet the suzerainty of the great Khan or Emperor of China. After making himself fully acquainted with the customs, manners, laws and requirements of Tibet, Tāmen returned to China. The Emperor loaded him with honours and rewards, and in recognition of his merits appointed him

President of the grand Yamen of "Son-ching Wen." In order to supervise the administration of the country now parcelled out into 27 *jam*, and to preserve the imperial supremacy of the country, the Emperor appointed one of his Tartar nobles, named Ijilig, as Resident of Tibet, and conferred on him the Tartar distinction of *Thon-ji*. He was the first minister who was sent by a Chinese Emperor to watch the state affairs of Tibet under the grand hierarchy of SAKYA. Henceforth the connection between the two countries (Tibet and China) becoming closer; free and easy intercourse, both commercial and political, made the Tibetan people happy and prosperous.

After starting *Thon-ji* Ijilig on his mission to Tibet, the Emperor himself led a large army to Jang-yul.¹ No resistance was offered by the people of that country to his victorious army. He annexed two provinces of Amdoh to China, and made over two provinces of Upper Doh (modern Kham) to Tibet.

In the tenth year of Emperor Khublai's reign Lama Phagpa the hierarch of Sakya was appointed spiritual instructor of the Imperial family. As a reward for this service the Emperor made a grant of the following districts to Lama Phagpa: Gacha Rab-kha, Nangso Latog-pa, Gangaitsa Lama Khar, and Dan Khang. The *jam* of Gong, which remained apart from Ü and Tsang was also assigned to him. These are said to have contained very fertile soil, a *kang* (Tibetan acre) of which was able to grow 5,000 *tar da* ² of barley.

Lama Phagpa paid three visits to China, and was every time received with the highest reverence by the Emperor at his grand palace of Taitu. The Emperor, Empress and the princes received religious blessings according to the cult of the Sakyapa school of Buddhism. On the second occasion the thirteen *Thikor* ³ of Tibet were presented to the hierarch by the Emperor for the service of the Lamaic Church.⁴ On the third occasion, it is stated, that all Tibet, which was anciently divided into three *cholkha*,⁵ was presented to the

¹ This included the Kokonur country and Amdoh.

² About 10 lbs.

³ After the survey, Dsongkha Jong, inclusive of Ngah-ri, Lo Jong and Dol Jong, was constituted into one *Thikor*. Northern and Southern Latoi-cha and Shalu comprised four *Thikor*; Da, Ber, and Khyung formed one *Thikor*; Yamdok and Tshalpa formed one *Thikor*, Gya, Di-khung, Yah, and Phagmodu comprised four *Thikor*; lastly, Jah-yul with 1,000 *hordu*, Duka-pa with 900 *hordu*, formed one *Thikor*. These were the thirteen *Thikhor* of Tibet in the 13th Century.

⁴ Very probably one-sixth of the revenue of the thirteen *Thikor* (which was the king's due) was granted to Lama Phagpa for the service of Church and the support of the monasteries.

⁵ Formerly, Tibet Proper and Greater Tibet, which is now called Ulterior Tibet,

grand hierarch of Sakya. Such liberality on the part of a monarch was unexampled in the world's history. The Emperor not only assigned the revenue of the whole country for the service of the Church but also kept its government under his direct control for ensuring peace and prosperity to the Land of the Lamas.

In the beginning of the year *earth-dragon* two Commissioners, named Akon and Mingling were deputed by the Emperor to make an official enumeration of the people of Tibet. They, with the help of *Ponchen Çākya Zangpo*, the chief Governor of Tibet, who was invested with the decorations and title of *Zam-du-gun Wen-hu* for his eminent services, took the first census of Tibet. They enumerated all the families residing in the provinces from Ngah-ri to Shalu in Tsang, and Governor Situ Akyi-get worked in the remaining provinces.

Upper Tibet, comprising the valleys of the higher Indus and Sutlej which was divided into three *kor* or circles and therefore, called Ngah-ri Kar-sum,¹ returned altogether 2,635 families, exclusive of 767 families residing within the territories of the *Ngah-Dag*, the hereditary chieftain of Ngah-ri who claimed his descent from king Srong-tsan-Gampo. In the southern districts of La-toi *Lhopa*, there were 1,088 families, while the northern districts, called La-toi *chang* returned 2,250 families.

The total of families in Ngah-ri and Tsang was 15,690, and that of the province of Ū (Central Tibet), including Kongpo, was 20,763, giving a grand total of 36,453. The population of Yam Dôk (lake Palti districts), which was at this time divided into six *Leb* and estimated at 750 families, was excluded from the above total. So also all the lands held by the different monasteries were not included in the state list which was made for the levying of revenues. A separate enumeration of the families contained in them was made. In Chumig *Thikor* there were 3,021 families; under Shalu 3,892 families. The Chang-Dôk, including lake Teng-ri-nor or *Nam-tsho*, till then not being included in any of the *Thikor*, was left out in the Census.

Mang-khar and Til-chen owned 120 families; Tsangpa, 87 families; were included in the three *Cholkha*. All the countries lying between Gung-thang in Ngah-ri and Sog-la Kyavo were included in what was called Choikyi *Cholkha* i.e., the division or province of Buddhism. The provinces between Sog-la Kyavo and Machu (*Hoangho*) headwaters formed the 2nd *Cholkha*, the place of black-headed men. The countries lying between Machu and Gya Chorten Karpo, the gate of the great wall where there was a white chorten, were included in the third *Cholkha*, the original home of the horse.

¹ Parang, with the mountains of Kangri, formed one *kor* or circle.

Gugé with numerous defiles and rugged cliffs, formed one *kor*.

Mang-Yul, with its mountain streams and glaciers formed one *kor*.

Bodong-riseb, 77 families; and Tomolung, Rasa, Kha-gangpa, 75 families; Dopeh mar-wa, 125 families; 35 families belonged to the service of the cathedral of Lhasa, in which the central image of Buddha the historical *chovo* or Lord Çākya-muni was located; Rasa-na-kor possessed 30 families, and Marla Thangpa only ten families.

Washi-lago returned, 131 families, Gya-mapody contained 50 families, Thang-tsha, 150 families, and Tshong-dui 114 families. Within the division of Geru, including Sakya, Latoi-lho, Kodeh, Do-chung and Yahru, there were 3,630 families. Dangra and Durminyeg contained altogether 30 families.

In the province of Ū:—Under Di-khung monastery there were 3,630 families, consisting of agricultural and pastoral people called *pyopa* and *Dók-pa*. Under the Tshal-pa Lamas there were 3,702 families. Phog-modu monastery returned 2,438 families, Yazang-pa contained 3,000 families. Gya-ma-wa and Cha-yul jointly returned 5,850 families. Sam-ye and Chim-phu-pa possessed 20 families exclusive of those who resided in the ancient endowments. In Doh there were 70 families. Gung-Khor-pa and Thangpa returned 70 families. Under the Lhasa authorities there were 600 families.

Rab-tsun-pa returned 90 families and the Dûk-pa authorities of Ralûng returned 225 families. The Thang-po-che returned 50 families.

In the district of Du-gu gang and Kharagpo there were 232 and 88 families respectively. This earliest enumeration of the people of Tibet (Ū and Tsang) made during the first establishment of political relations between China and the grand hierarchs of Sakya, was obtained from a manuscript roll of *daphne* paper which contained the seal of the first *Pon-chen*, named Çākya Zangpo, by the author of the book called *Gya-poi Kyi Yig-tshang* (records of China and Tibet) in the archives of Sakya and preserved in his book.

During the reigns of Khublai Khan's successors, in land and revenue matters, a clear distinction was made between state and church possessions. At the commencement of the reign of Thakwan Themur, the last Emperor of the Yen or Tartar dynasty, Commissioners Tha-gu Anugan and Kechogtai Ping-chang were deputed to take a general census of Tibet. They were assisted by *Ponchen* Shon-nu Wang in his second administration of that country. The enumeration of men and households was made in the following manner:—

In order to be counted as a *hordu*—a Tartar family was required to possess the following:—

1. A house supported at least by six pillars within its four walls.
2. Land for cultivation comprising an area over which 100 to 1,000lb. of seed-grain could be sown.

3. Husband and wife, together with all the junior brothers who shared with the husband the wife's bed, two children, and a pair of domestic servants—in all even or more.

4. Cattle—one milch cow, one heifer, a pair of plough bullocks, one he-goat and 12 she-goats, one ram with 12 ewes.

These four heads completed the qualifications of a Tibetan family for paying revenue to the state for the lands it held under Government.

Such a family was called *Hordu*, from *hor*, Tartar nomad and *du* smoke. From the top-hole of a Tartar tent issued the smoke of cooking which gave the name of *hordu* to the owner of the tent. Though the term *Pyodu* signified a Tibetan agriculturist's house or family, the two words afterwards became mixed up. The word *tsa-du* a settled family paying revenue, also became mixed up with the other two terms.

Fifty such *Hordu* formed a *Tāgo*.

Two *Tāgo* made a *gya-kor* (circle of 100 families).

Ten *gya-kor* formed a *tong-kor* (circle of 1,000 families).

Ten *tong-kor* formed one *Thikor* or *Thikhor* (a circle of 10,000 families).

The population of Tibet proper was originally estimated at a million and three hundred thousand souls, out of which 22,000 belonged to the church. Tibet was originally divided into 13 *Thikoron*, each *Thikor* containing circles average 10,000 families or at least 100,000 souls. A *Thipon* (chief over 10,000) was appointed over every *Thikor*.

Ten *Thikor* formed one *Lu*.

Ten *Lu* formed one *Shing*. Under Emperor Khublai there were eleven such *Shing*, outside of China, over which he ruled from his capital Taitu (Peking). The three great provinces of Tibet, then designated under the name of *Chlokha-sum*, did not form even one *Shing*; yet, out of courtsey, and because it was the headquarters of Buddhism, the Emperor permitted Tibet to be counted as a *Shing*.

From every full *Thikor* Government permitted about 1,000 males to be drawn to the church to be monks for whose support one-sixth of the revenue was made a present of to the hierarchs of Sakya.

It is also stated that in the year *fire-hog*, twenty years after the first census, two Commissioners, named Hosha and Oonukhan, were deputed by the great Yamen of Peking to make a more correct enumeration of the inhabitants of Tibet. Their labours were embodied in a voluminous work called *Losal kungah gyan Rin Theng*.

In the *Debter* (official records) compiled by Du-wensha, Shon-nugon, and one of the ministers of Sakya, the following accounts occur:—Tibet was divided into districts and sub-districts called *Jam-chen* (larger district) and *Jam-chung* (smaller district). The province of

Tsang, together with Ngah-ri, was divided into four *Jam-chen*. Every *Jam-chen* was divided among 100 *Go*, or headmen. Sakya was constituted into a separate *Jam-chen*; South Marla thang was formed into a *Jam-chung*, Shab-khar Ngah-ri, Gyam-ring, and Pong-len, each formed a *Jam-chung*.

The last, *i.e.*, Ponglen, was constituted into what is called *Mag-jam*, districts for military purpose yielding revenue. The *Jam-chung* Mansarawara was held by the authorities of Purang.

Of the 3,892 families of Shalu, 832 were made over to the Chyrog-tshang-pa, 3,060 were included in Tshong-din. So Shalu monastery was made dependent of Tshong-din authorities. Chyrog tshang was placed under 28 *Tago*. The Shang districts which were included in Tag-jam, were placed under eleven *Tago*. Yamdök was divided into 16 *leb*. The *Jam-chung* of Yarsreb was held by the Yamdök authorities.

The following *jam* were formed in Ü:—

1. Gopeh *jam* included Diklung, with 3,000 *hordu*.
2. Dar *jam* included Chya-yul, with 2,650 *hordu*.
3. Tshal-pai Retsa contained 450 families.
4. Sog-*jam*, in addition to its strength of 2,650 Gyamapa (mixed Tibetan and Chinese) families, included Tshalpa Zung khar, and thereby possessed 3,000 families.
5. Tsi-mar *jam* included Phag-modu with 2,438 *hordu*, Satag with 500 and Lhasa 600 families.
6. Sha-po *jam* comprising Tugu ganj, Kharag Dükpa, Tama Thang-pa had 200 families. Holkha-pa possessed 400 families.
7. Kong-*Jam*, including Yah zang, contained 3,000 families.

